

Appl. No. 09/608,705
Amtd dated May 27, 2004
Reply to Office Action of February 17, 2004

Remarks

The Office Action mailed February 17, 2004 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Prior to entry of this paper, Claims 1-9, 12-16 and 19-28 were pending. Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 13-16 and 19-23 were rejected. Claims 7, 12 and 24-28 were objected to. In this paper, Claims 29-33 are newly added, Claims 10-12, 17, 18, and 24-28 are cancelled, and Claims 1, 5-9, 19 and 23 are amended. Claims 1-9, 13-16, 19-23 and 29-33 are currently pending. No new subject matter has been added. For at least the following reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16-19, and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable United States Patent No. 6,490,624 issued to *Sampson* in view of United States Patent No. 5,977,964 issued to *Williams*. Claims 15 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sampson* in view of *Williams* and further in view of United States Patent No. 6,480,727 issued to *Gerdisch*. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claims 7, 12 and 24-28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 8, 19 and 23 and added independent Claims 29 and 33.

Claims 1, 8, 19 and 23 as amended, include the limitations recited in objected Claims 24, 12, 25, and 27, respectfully. Furthermore, newly added Claim 29 includes the limitations of independent Claim 19 and objected to Claim 26, and newly added Claim 33 includes the limitations of independent Claim 23 and objected to Claim 28. Thus, Claims 1, 8, 19, 23, 19 and 33 are submitted to be allowable, and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claims 2-7 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 9 and 13-16 are dependent on Claim 8, Claims 20-22 are dependent on Claim 19, and Claims 30-32 are dependent on Claim 29. As stated above, Claims 1, 8, 19 and 29 are submitted to be allowable. Thus, Claims 2-7, 9, 13-16,

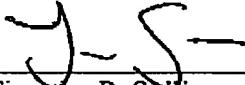
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20-22 and 30-32 are submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons that the base claims on which they rely are allowable.

It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby. Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
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